# Nixon's Mood Stirs Anxiety; Some Find Him Distraught, Others Say His Spirits Are High

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 14—A White House official who recently saw President Nixon expressed concern the other day that Mr. Nixon seemed to be committed to a hard-line defense of his Administration in the Watergate scandals.

Such a rigid stance, the aide said, could foreclose the reconciliation he believe necessary for the President to govern effectively for the rest of his term.

Outside the Government, men of great wealth and power, ranging from the Rockefellers of New York to the lawyer barons of Washington, who form a kind of "old boy network" whenever the Republic seems endangered, have been on the telephone asking one another one unanswered question: "What is the state of mind of Richard M. Nixon?"

**Two-Pronged Defense**

These two instances point up the extent of the anxiety in Washington as Mr. Nixon, after a long period of silence and hours of lonely contemplation on the mountaintop at Camp David, prepares to make his defense in the Watergate case. He will appeal for public support in a nationally broadcast address at 9 o'clock tomorrow night and will issue a document by his lawyers seeking to lay to rest the allegations made before the Senate Watergate committee.

The evidence of Mr. Nixon's mood, obtained chiefly from people who have seen him and talked with him, is ambiguous. To some he has appeared worried and distraught. To others he seemed in remarkably good spirits, considereding the circumstances. Mr. Nixon remains a very private man who rarely conveys his feelings even to close associates.

However, after five months of public disclosures of White House involvement in Watergate and related matters, the following clear tendencies have emerged.

¶The President has gone through several periods of anguish and frustration, expressed in occasional outbursts to members of his staff about charges that he considers irresponsible. His associates insist he has come out of the worst of it and is now in a philosophical mood as he prepares his defense.

¶He has not shown any of the kind of physical and mental deterioration displayed by previous Presidents, such as Wilson and Harding, when under great stress. A Democratic Senator who saw the President in mid-July and again a few days ago said, "On both occasions he looked all right. He did seem rather nervous and tense, but he did not look fatigued. He looked rested."

¶His tendencies toward seclusion, his restless search for retreats away from Washington and his preference for making his own decisions without advice from independent minds have increased in the Watergate period.

¶The belief that political enemies of the Administration, Democrats and some Republicans, are using the Watergate charges to thwart the President's efforts to carry out the policies he was elected to achieve, has increased among White House aides, presumably with Presidential encouragement.

Some long-time Nixon observers and associates—noting his refusal to compromise on the release of tape recordings of his conversations with the

former White House counsel, John W. Dean 3d, and his public characterization of some of the Watergate charges as "murky, small, unimportant, vicious little things"—read the President's mood as one of determination to fight to the bitter end for his position, a disposition he had frequently displayed.

"I think he could pull out of it," said a long-tome Nixon friend and campaign worker, who asked that his name not be used. "But I wonder if this is the way to do it. It could be tragic."

Lack of hard information about what has been going through Mr. Nixon's mind has intensified the search for clues. Some who have talked to the President described him as worried and distraught. To others he has seemed in remarkably good spirits, considering the circumstances. He has been seen to change from day to day.

However, one Nixon associate said that the stress Mr. Nixon had undergone over the five-month period was much greater than his aides would admit. There are the following bits of evidence to bear this out:

¶An associate dining with the President and his family one evening noted that the dinner was marked by the most awkward kind of silence.

¶At rare public appearances in the last few weeks—with the Soviet leader, Leonid I. Brezhnev, in San Clemente and in greeting crowds in Illinois and Florida — the President's countenance bore expressions of intense pain in unguarded moments, according to several observers.

¶In San Clemente in July, in the presence of staff members, the President angrily denounced newspaper articles about what he considered unfair charges of the expenditure of public funds on his vacation homes, and on another occasion the failure of his May 22 statement on the Watergate case to quell criticism of his role in the matter.

¶Visitors to the President's office have reported, on occasion, a mood of preoccupati and brooding that they had not previously noted in the President.

### Seems More Withdrawn

Over the five-month period, the President has appeared to become more withdrawn as he has publicly sought to show that he is opening his Administration to more diversity of thought after the departure of his top aides, John D. Ehrlichman and H.R. Haldeman.

Before the Watergate disclosures, he was said to have with John B. Connally, whom he brought in as special adviser in May to help repair damage to his Administration. But the Nixon-Connally meetings were reported strained and Mr. Connally left at midsummer.

Bringing in Melvin R. Laird as domestic adviser and Bryce Harlow as counselor in an effor to widen the Administration's political base did not change Mr. Nixon's habit of consulting chiefly with his trusted subordinates—Gen. Alexander M. Haig, Ronald L. Ziegler, who still carried the title of press secretary although he has given up daily meetings with the press, and Rose Mar Woods, his long-time personal secretary.

"The President isn't at ease with people like Laird and Harlow," said a Nixon associate

His frequent meetings with Henry A. Kissinger, his chief foreign policy adviser, are businesslike and unrevealing as to Mr. Nixon's personal thoughts, according to several sources.

Mr. Nixon still has long meetings with his close friend, Charles G. Rebozo, the Florida businessman, who was a recent guest at Camp David, but no one pretends that Mr. Rebozo advises Mr. Nixon on Government policy.

The President's trips away from the Washington White House have increased. In the five-month period the President has spent five long weekends at Key Biscayne, 25 days at San Clemente and most weekends at Camp David. He has recently made several trips to Camp David at midweek and has gone on a number of evening excursions on the Presidential yacht, the Sequoia.

### Offices Elsewhere

The President's restlessness, which predates the Watergate disclosures, is indicated by the number of offices he maintains. He has made the Presidential Oval Office here, long known as a symbol of Presidential power, into a ceremonial one and does most of his work in a less pretentiou office in the Executive Office Building.

He also has two offices in San Clemente, one in his home and another in the adjacent Government complex. And he has rooms for work at Camp David, in Key Biscayne and at Grand Cay in the Bahamas, the island retreat of his friend Robert J. Abplanalp, where the President is frequently a guest.

Mr. Nixon has not submitted to public questioning since March 15, the date of his last news conference, a decision, his spokesmen said, that was based on a desire for the Watergate committee to complete the first phase of its hearings before Mr. Nixon made clear his position in the matter.

Yet Mr. Nixon has sought to show his grasp of the Government and an optimistic outlook through a number of public appearances. At a White House ceremony yesterday for the signing of a major transportation bill, he bantered and joked at length with members of Congress and transportation officials.

"It was downright gaiety," said one who observed the event. "The President laughed and laughed and laughed."

There is some evidence that the President sees a good possibility of turning aside the Watergate charges by capitalizing on the finding that some people believe that, however bad the Watergate disclosures, the President ought to be freed to run the Government. This is the current line among a number of White House aides, and there has been a dispute among the hard-liners and the moderates as to whether the President should openly attack the Watergae committee on the ground that it is interfering with Presidential tasks.

In any event, the President now is reported more optimistic in private about his chances of overcoming Watergate and regaining control of the Government, and this would explain his more buoyant mood of late